



## The Fata Morgana Land

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I choose this title to discuss the attempts being made to find territory for Jews which should not be Palestine. "*Fata morgana*" means a mirage, and in explaining this name I wish at the outset to lay down two fundamentals. Firstly, I consider the whole matter a mirage. Secondly I deliberately want to give it a fine, honourable name. I could have entitled the article ironically and contemptuously, for example: "the answer is a lemon;" but I do not want to do so and earnestly advise all those who do not believe in a "territory" to follow my example, and treat the hopeless search with the utmost respect.

There is a zealous tendency to treat territorialist endeavours with contempt and anger. I hear of a tendency to go even further: to suggest that when an individual Jew or a dozen Jews or a thousand Jews want to emigrate to Bolivia or Shanghai a loyal Zionist dare not help. Such zealots plead that it is not logical for a loyal Zionist, who wants only Palestine in all circumstances, to help in the further spreading and distribution of Jewish migration. I have my doubts as to the logic of both tendencies.

### Political Logic

Logic is an important matter in politics. People who say that life is not logical are mistaken, for life is always logical. Only "logic" is a complicated conception, just as complicated as the conception of "arithmetic." Everyone has heard the story of the Russian peasant who once propounded the following mathematical theory: "four and four make eight, I know; maybe three and five also make eight – but that's a Jewish



trick." He would have been astounded, that peasant, if he had been told that 613 minus 1,000 plus the square root of 625 plus 460 minus ten times nine-is also eight.

The methods of political logic, too, are sometimes complicated. For example: if a thousand Jewish refugees go to Uruguay instead of Palestine, it is unquestionably, not Palestine; but in this way Uruguay is drawn into the world-debate about Jewish refugees, about a refuge for those refugees, a Jewish State and, finally about Palestine .If our refugees did not press at all the gates of every country; there would be no hope of turning the question of Jewish migration into a world problem. Just because they are tearing at the Uruguays and Paraguays, all these countries are being driven into that struggle for a Jewish State which forms the foundation of the Greater Zionist "alliance policy." If anybody dare to organise a really active illegal immigration into England, it would be a gigantic factor in increasing England's interest in opening the gates of Palestine for us. Bolivia and Chile have, of course, a much less direct connection with the problem, but still an important connection. At times such as these, helping Jewish refugees to get into countries where they are not wanted ( which means *all* countries) is equivalent to making energetic diplomatic demarches for the Zionist ideal in those countries.

I say this only about the small scale far-flung immigration into countries which nobody considers turning into Jewish States. Quite different are the "territorialist" plans; for if there were really a "suitable territory" it would be a dangerous threat to our demands regarding Palestine. But here, too, I must advise all Zionists to be careful of peasant logic. The only basis on which we can in these times, carry on a political struggle for Palestine, is the humanitarian approach – the mighty argument of Jewish need. The chain of ideas with which we are compelled



to operate is the following one: "Our masses must emigrate – they can only emigrate to a Jewish State – and there is no country but Palestine." When you want to operate with a chain of arguments each link of the chain is important absolutely: if one of the links is broken – it is the end of the chain. It is not wise to present every "ally "with the ultimatum: "if you are not yet convinced that there is no country but Palestine, you are no ally of mine." Why should we hurry? Let him search meantime. If tomorrow or the next day he imagines that he has found a new Biro-Bidjan for us – it will be time enough then to break off negotiations; not now, while he is still "searching," and when we are so certain that his search is vain and hopeless.

### *Reductio Ad Absurdum*

I repeat, I say this without any irony. Even with Herzl the process of "Zionisation" passed through the phase of the *fata-morgana*-land: at the beginning of his Jewish State trajectory he was far removed from Palestine Zionism, and only his contact with the Jewish mass-soul converted him. In our days many Christian minds are going through the same process, and it would be a great mistake to interrupt their studies. Let them learn their alphabet consecutively, one letter after the other; I should not be afraid even to say: *help* them learn. Whoever once studied elementary geometry will remember the method of proving a theorem by "*reductio ad absurdum*". This method consists of the teacher and text-book first suggesting a false solution of the theorem. "Let us assume that black is white, and see what absurd conclusions we come to." In politics this method is even more suitable; it may even be possible to prove that in political life the "ad absurdum" argument is the most effective. You believe that there is a *fata-morgana* land somewhere? Very good. Here is



**your globe: search. Perhaps I shall even light the lamp for you to see better. I know the result in advance: mirage.**

**I have a suspicion that the nervousness on this question of a number of honest zealots for Palestine maybe may be ascribed to the fact that they are themselves not sure about the absurdity. Perhaps, at bottom, they are afraid that a "suitable territory" will really be discovered. I want, therefore, to explain why, in my opinion at any rate, it is most profoundly doubtful that such an object will be discovered.**

### **No Suitors**

**The background of the doubt is the history of the last ten or fifteen years. Why has it not occurred to a single Government in the world, since the War, to suggest a territory to the Jews?**

**All the Governments were well aware of two great facts. Firstly, that Jewish colonisation was bringing a rain of gold to Palestine the like of which it is difficult to find in the history of all colonisations. And secondly, that in Palestine the Jews were having difficulties, trouble with the Arabs, trouble with British Administration. How is it possible that the combination of two such facts did not bring about the natural result: what in economic terminology is called "an offer of goods?"**

**The first fact – the golden rain – was widely known throughout the world. Between 1920 and 1938 Jews poured about 100 million pounds into Palestine. Calculated in relation to the increase in the Jewish population, this means more than 300 pounds per head – 300 pounds for each man, woman and child, whether immigrant or born in Palestine. The world has**



not yet seen such an unbelievably rich immigration. Every consul used to report on it, year in year out; in my files I have journals in a score of languages, half of which I cannot even decipher, journals from all five continents, with articles, collected during the five years preceding the disturbances, all dealing with the financial wonders of Jewish immigration into Palestine.

That the second fact – the troubles encountered by the Jews – was also well known in every country of all God's five continents, I do not need to prove not economic, scientific journals, but ordinary daily newspapers reported these even with sensational exaggerations, in 1920, in 1921, in 1929, and now every day since April, 1936.

In other words, in the eyes of the whole world, Jewish colonisation has been like a bride with a colossal dowry who is constantly quarrelling with her young man and whom the young man does not love. According to human nature, there should have been dozens of other young men, or at least dozens of *shadchanim* sent by various young men's families, proposing all kinds of "suitable territories." Why have neither the young men nor the *shadchanim* made an appearance?

The only reply, which thrusts itself upon us purely deductively, is that there are no suitable territories. To be more exact: in the whole world, there is no such territory as combines in itself those characteristics which, in this case, are absolutely essential. What are the characteristics which, even in the eyes of strange, Gentile "young men's families", represent the *sine qua non* conditions for making a territory "suitable" for Jews ?



## One Reason

**Here is the first condition: the State that wants to suggest a "territory" to us must renounce that territory completely must – make it an independent country. Thus must be done not because the Jews are such separatists but for objective reasons – because otherwise "it cannot be done."**

**The world has learnt, from innumerable examples, that the greatest of ordinary dangers facing every attempt at agricultural colonisation is that the colonist will not succeed – and that they will flock to the towns. In Australia, for example, this has been the case with the great majority of new settlers in the areas in which colonisation has been attempted since the beginning of the century. Instead of converting the bush into cornfields, the unsuccessful ones "inundated" the chief cities, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. As long, however, as these were almost exclusively "Anglo-Saxons" this was not so terribly serious. But it would be an entirely different matter if it had been an "inundation" of Jews. I believe that further explanations – as to why just a Jewish inundation would be particularly undesirable – are unnecessary.**

**In others words, therefore: with the best will in the world, a friendly Government may propose a territory to the Jews only when it can "separate" such a territory from its own country – and separate it so sharply and clearly that the frontier should be closed, that the people on the other side should not be able to come "to us" without a special passport, in special cases, and for a limited period.**

**To achieve this there are only two methods. One is the old Russian method: a "tcherta" – a closed settlement for Jews. Who ever is caught**



outside that area is punished and deported. This system, however, has several great disadvantages. For example: the Government would have to introduce some system of identification passes, especially for its own citizens; otherwise there would be no means of finding out who had settled illegally. Secondly, it is a very ugly, a very reactionary method, with which a respectable Government would not wish to soil its hands. Thirdly, it would be futile, for there are always thousand of ways of settling on the other side of a *tcherta*.

There remains only the second method. The Jewish territory must be a separate independent State from the outset. Not an "autonomous province," nor a canton in a federation; for between the provinces of the same State, between the autonomous cantons of the same federation, the free inter-migration of citizens cannot be prohibited. In a modern State in general the free movement of *citizens* cannot be forbidden. Entry may be prohibited only to aliens.

That is the reason why, for example, the efforts of many years to persuade the Australian Government to permit a systematic Jewish colonisation in one of the empty areas of that empty continent are so hopeless. The supporters of the scheme swear that it is quite good area, with an abundance of water and no inhabitants. Maybe. But never will Australia permit an attempt which may end (as has several times happened with "Anglo-Saxons") in the "Judaising " of Melbourne and Sydney. From their point of view the first prerequisite of such an attempt is to give up the area completely, make it an alien country with which Australia should have neither a common Parliament nor a common Government.



**It is superfluous to mention that not in our time can such a sacrifice be expected from a young nationally-conscious country, or even from older countries.**

### **Another Reason**

**The second condition is that the territory must be empty. If there are others living there, the same troubles will be encountered as with the Arabs in Palestine. These "others" may even be negroes: it makes no difference. If the negroes themselves are unable to shout and write, they will find white protectors (first of all Englishmen) who will take up the cudgels on their behalf, and – justly – pose a difficult ethical question: "If we may not take a country away from the Arabs, why can we do it from negroes?"**

**By the way: people today imagine that if we had accepted Britain's proposal to colonise Uganda in 1903, we should by now have had a mighty State. I doubt it. I consider it infinitely more probable that the result of our consent would have been altogether different. An unprecedented caterwauling would have been broken loose in England at taking away land from innocent blacks whom England had undertaken to protect and to educate; of course, it would be said, there is every sympathy for the persecuted Russian Jews but their place is in Palestine, etcetera, etcetera – and the end would have been, in accordance with the tradition we know so well, a short official communiqué to the effect that the Government finds itself obliged to withdraw the Uganda proposal.**

**But since 1903 even the negroes in Africa have gone through an appreciable development. There is a constant and bitter dispute even**



about the few, virtually paid, British settlers in Kenya or Rhodesia. Of Jewish mass colonization – in a territory which is not completely a literally empty area – there can be no question: and it makes no difference whether in Africa or America, North or South. Simply as the logical conclusion of the arguments which aim at ruling Palestine out for us, the "territory" must be an uninhabited country. That is the second unqualified, *sine qua non* requisite.

### And a Third

The third requisite is, of course, that the territory should be colonisable. Greenland fulfils the first two requisites, but so far, thank God, they have not offered it to us. True, Alaska *has* been mentioned, but it was just this estimable idea that evoked a just retort from an honest Christian soul – Mr. Roosevelt – who recently said in a public lecture " If it is desired to find a land for the Jews, it must be a land fit for white men to live in." The experience in Palestine from the *Bilu* Settlers down to the *halutzim* and the *pelugot-giyus*, has, it is true, shown that the Jews can be an excellent pioneer under very difficult conditions: but we dare not exaggerate. Where other pioneers have failed completely – and failed even generations ago when man was less softened – there is no possibility for Jewish colonisation. I do not mean this in the sense that the Jews would "fail": *that* is another matter – I am afraid that we would "fail" even in colonising the Garden of Eden if the Garden of Eden were not in Palestine, for with us the main factor is one of a spiritual affinity, which today does not require discussion. I mean only that no Government and no Commission will propose such a territory to us, simply because serious people hate making fools of themselves. *Their* belief in Jewish talent for pioneering is in any case a very moderate one, and neither in Labrador



**nor in the forests between the Orinoco and the Amazon will they suggest a territory.**

**Only a territory which fulfils these three conditions can be made the subject of a proposal:-**

- (a) that it is uninhabited;**
- (b) that it is habitable for ordinary white colonists;**
- (c) that the Government is prepared to exclude it completely from its own State.**

### **The *Mirages* Will Vanish**

**Now take a geographical atlas and try to find such a territory. And try to find such a territory. I know it: its name is *Fata Morgan*. If it had existed it would not have waited for the Jews.**

**It is not British Guiana; and soon the world will convince itself of this. It is very good and very useful that an investigating Commission has been sent there: For from its report the world will learn the bitter truth about all such illusions. Those – Christians and Jews – who are expecting something serious from British Guiana will be dumbfounded by two surprises: the microscopic minuteness, in relation to our need, of the possibilities the Commission will discover; and the snail-like slowness of the tempo of colonisation they will envisage. I am bold enough to suggest in advance – though only approximately of course – that the probable maximum of any concrete suggestion in their report will be: about fifty thousand colonists in ten years, *if* a sum of who knows how many millions is invested...**



**Let us only not lose patience. The pressure of realities is compelling and pushing the world in the direction of our historic aim; but there are still several final obstacles in the way, among them a few illusions. One of the illusions (at least among non-Jews) is the London quasi-Conference; but wait a month or two and there will be no relic of it. And a few months after that, the second and greater illusion, the Eldorado-legend of a "suitable territory," will also evaporate. And the pressure of hard realities will lead the world and us towards our destiny.**